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February 14, 2012

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: IB Docket No. 11-109

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I wanted to share my thoughts regarding the LightSquared GPS interference testing issues currently being considered, which I recently shared with the NTIA. As a State Representative from a rural state, I've been following this issue closely because of the implications it has for rural economic development. I grew up in Bryant Pond, Maine, notable only for being the last town in the country to have crank phones. To say the least, I know a little about being on the tail end of innovation. I've blogged about it a couple of times with the Huffington Post, hoping to raise awareness among other legislators and policy makers about the vital importance of this project moving forward.

While LightSquared now says it has fixed most of the GPS interference problems, including issues with "high precision" GPS devices, the GPS industry continues to turn this engineering issue into political engineering. While that might benefit lobbying firms around the beltway, it does nothing for those of us fighting to create jobs in rural areas. In Maine, we used Recovery Act funds to invest in the Three Ring Binder project that is bringing broadband to parts of the state that did not have it with great success. But there are still places that need broadband for businesses to compete, their kids to learn, and to bridge a very real digital divide.

I write to urge the FCC to find a path forward that enables rural Americans to benefit from both mobile broadband and GPS. Moreover, any testing to resolve interference concerns should focus on solving the engineering issue responsibly, with integrity and sans the political theater.

Sincerely,

Representative Diane Russell
Portland, Maine